

Army divisions up to battle strength. The JCS also ordered the U.S.-based 2nd Infantry Division, a regimental combat team (RCT) from the 11th Airborne Division, and various armor, artillery and engineer units to the Far East.

Marine combat units and Navy amphibious forces were especially critical to MacArthur's anticipated operations on the Korean peninsula. Supported by General Clifton B. Cates, Commandant of the Marine Corps, MacArthur persuaded the JCS to fully man and equip the 1st Marine Division and deploy the unit to Korea by mid-September. General Cates partially filled the understrength division with Marines pulled from bases throughout the United States, but this was not enough.

President Truman then approved Cates's request for mobilization of the entire ground element of the Marine Corps Organized Reserve and attached Navy medical units. The first contingent of the division to arrive in Korea was the 5th Marine RCT.

The amphibious ships that transported the Marine units from the United States also bolstered Admiral Doyle's amphibious force. The newcomers included three dock landing ships (LSDs), two attack transports (APAs), one tank landing ship (LST) and one medium landing ship. To complement this force, Doyle got control of LSTs operated by the Army in Japan and enlisted the assistance of the Shipping Control Administration, Japan (SCAJAP), a civilian occupation agency that controlled

Japanese merchant shipping. In the SCAJAP inventory were 34 former U.S. Navy LSTs, manned by Japanese, and Doyle quickly integrated 17 of them into his force.

Despite the growing strength of UN ground, naval and air forces, the North Korean offensive rolled on. Thin U.S. and ROK defensive lines often were broken by coordinated NKPA tank assaults and infantry flank attacks, which led to a series of demoralizing retreats. With his command in dire straits, General Walker ordered UN forces to withdraw behind the Naktong River, the last natural barrier to Pusan, on 1 August. This defensive bastion soon became known as the Pusan Perimeter.

To stiffen the ground defenses, MacArthur reinforced the Eighth Army with the



Bound for Korea, leathernecks of the 5th Marine Regiment board the attack transport Pickaway (APA 222) in San Diego, California, on 12 July 1950.



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Tanned and sweating gunners of the Army's 64th Field Artillery Battalion operate a 105mm howitzer in defense of the Pusan Perimeter. Fighting with determination and skill, General Walker's Eighth Army units defeated one NKPA attack after another during the brutally hot summer of 1950.



Men of the 5th Marine Regiment withstand an enemy mortar barrage on 3 September as they defend the high ground near the hotly contested Nak-tong Bulge. Less than two weeks later, these Marines would storm ashore at Inchon.

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Captain John S. Thach, a highly decorated World War II veteran and originator of the "Thach Weave" fighter tactic, and commanding officer of the escort carrier *Sicily* (CVE 118) discusses a mission with two of his pilots, 1st Lieutenant Roland B. Heilman (left) and Major Robert P. Keller of VMF-214. Marine fighter squadrons operating from *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait* (CVE 116) flew hundreds of ground support sorties during August 1950.



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The eight-inch guns of heavy cruiser *Helena* (CA 75) bomb Communist forces ashore. Throughout the summer of 1950, cruisers and destroyers rained thousands of shells on enemy troops, armored vehicles and supply trucks all along the coast of South Korea.

2nd Infantry Division and the Marine Brigade, comprised of the 5th Marine RCT and MAG-33. During the first two weeks of August, the NKPA launched four major attacks. The Marine Brigade repelled two of them, including a serious penetration in the vital "Naktong Bulge" sector. Navy cruisers and destroyers provided gunfire support that helped repel assaults near the coast, as well. In early September, the Marine Brigade countered one last NKPA breakthrough at the Naktong Bulge.

Throughout this period, U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marine, as well as British and Australian, planes struck targets throughout Korea. Navy Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) and Marine reconnaissance detachments executed raids ashore from the high-speed transport *Horace A. Bass* (APD 124). By 4 September, Communist forces were spent. There would be no more major attacks on the perimeter, but MacArthur expected the NKPA to be just as tough on the defense as it had been on the offense. The general had no intention of launching the Eighth Army on a frontal assault against the dogged North Koreans.